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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 000855

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TAGS: PREL KPAL BA

SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT ABBAS VISITS BAHRAIN

REF: A. MANAMA 839 (NOTAL)

B. MANAMA 811 (NOTAL)

Classified by Ambassador William T. Monroe for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

**¶1.** (U) Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas met with King Hamad during a four-hour visit to Bahrain June 14. Also attending the meeting were Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa, Crown Prince Shaikh Salman, and Foreign Minister Shaikh Mohammed. The King hosted a lunch in honor of Abbas and his delegation following the meeting.

**¶2.** (U) According to press reports, the King stressed the necessity of implementing the road map leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. "There are currently numerous opportunities that should not be missed in order to stimulate the peace process and achieve a comprehensive and fair peace in the region," the King said. He hoped for the resumption of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians to achieve a peaceful resolution. In his comments to the media, Abbas praised Bahrain's support and thanked the Bahraini delegation currently in the West Bank that is helping set up a hospital for Palestinian children. Abbas said that his recent talks with President Bush and Secretary Rice were positive and constructive.

**¶3.** (C) The Palestinian Charge d'Affaires told the Ambassador June 14, during a condolence call for the passing of long-time Palestinian Ambassador in Bahrain Wafa Nabhan, who died on the eve of the visit, that Abbas originally had planned to visit Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, and the UAE on his way to Doha for the G-77 plus China Summit. He had to cancel the stops in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the UAE, but at the request of King Hamad, he stuck with his plan to visit Bahrain. King Hamad reportedly postponed his departure to Doha to host Abbas, and the two departed in separate planes for the Summit at about the same time.

**¶4.** (C) Comment: The largely symbolic visit was important in demonstrating Bahrain's support for Abbas and his policies. King Hamad may have been anxious to show his encouragement for Abbas following the GOB's blunder in agreeing to be the site for the (rejectionist) Al Quds Institute's annual conference, which the King indefinitely "postponed" earlier in the week (reflets).

MONROE